Iowa Department of Human Services
CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

Name of Center: Sunflower Child Development Center **Enrollment:** 115 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 19264

Street: 300 HWY 9 W **City:** Decorah Iowa **Zip** 52101 **County:** Winneshiek

Mailing Address: 300 HWY 9 W, Decorah, IA, 52101

Director's Name: Holly Benda & Amy Winter **Phone Number:** 563-382-5717

On-Site Supervisor(s): Holly Benda & Amy Winter **E-Mail:** holly.benda@sunflowerchildcare.org

Date(s) of Visit:

Licensing Visit **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** X **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received **Yes** **No** X **NA** **Date Signed:**

FIRE INSPECTION X **State** **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 02-06-2023

Comments : Compliance on 02/15/23

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: Profit X Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	21	18	52	38	129
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 1

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2023 to 04-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 07-03-2023

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 03/08/23 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Sunflower Child Development Center in Decorah. I met with Daiton Johnson, the interim Executive Director of the center. Ms. Johnson has been with the program since August 2018 and has worked in various rooms during her time at the center. She started administrative duties in November 2021. Merlene Brown remains with the program and primarily has been focusing on the construction of the new building. Ms. Brown has been with the program in several different roles, including previously being the director, for many years. Holly Benda is the office manager and assistant director. The center employs 34 employees.

Sunflower Child Development Center was started in 1975 and operates out of a free-standing building. The program operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 am until 5:30 pm. The center serves infants through school-aged children and is open year-around. There are currently 115 children enrolled. The center had an IQ4K level 1 that expires on 10/31/24.

The center operates out of the following rooms: Ducklings (birth until approximately 13 months old), Chipmunks (approximately 13 to 24 months), Otters (two-year-olds), Owls (three-year-olds), Fox (four-year-old preschool) and Wolves (school-aged). An inspection of each room was completed.

Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with multiple pictures of the children and their families, the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time in the rooms.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, computers/Ipads, puppets, Play-Doh, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they were easily accessible to the children.

The Sunflower Child Development Center partners with the Decorah School District to provide the voluntary four-year-old preschool program. The voluntary preschool program meets on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm. Richelle Souza is the lead teacher in the Fox room for the voluntary preschool program. She started with the program in August 2022 and is a full-time employee. She has a BA in psychology with a teaching credential for K-6. She is in the process of working toward her early childhood education endorsement through TEACH.

The preschool program uses the Creative Curriculum to develop lesson plans and completes the GOLD assessments. Ms. Souza states she also uses additional resources to create lesson plans. Activities are planned around studies. The preschool program participates in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS). The other rooms use Creative Curriculum and a variety of resources to develop lesson plans. The length of the study depends on the topic and the children's interest. Lesson plans were available for review in every room except for the Chipmunk room.

The program uses the Brightwheel app to communicate with parents. Daily sheets for the children under the age of two-

years-old are completed in the app. Staff members and parents enjoy the app.

There was a phone with emergency numbers in all the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits in each room. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in February 2023 and is good for two years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site and is in the Fox, Chipmunk and Owl rooms. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 02/06/23 with compliance on 02/15/23.

The program participates in the Farm to Early Childhood Education (F2ECE) program. They have a weekly curriculum for the program that incorporates new foods each month. It also incorporates a weekly fitness program as part of F2ECE. Darla Schnuelle oversees the program, and she does an amazing job. She creates lesson plans and incorporates several fun activities into the program.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). They serve breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Shelly Dolley is the cook. She started with the program in November 2022. She has completed the Serv Safe class and has her Certified Board for Dietary Managers (CBDM) certificate. She has worked in the food service industry for 36 years. She uses a four-week rotation of menus that rotate three times a year, so the menus are seasonal. The children eat in their classrooms.

The center provides one kind of formula, baby food and cereal to the infants. If parents want a different brand, they must provide it. Bottles are prepared in the room. The parents have the choice of taking the bottles home or leaving them at the center where they are put through the dishwasher in the kitchen.

There is a refrigerator present in the infant room, Chipmunk room and the Otter room and thermometers were present.

The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. Menus and allergies were posted. Menus and dietary restrictions are also posted in the rooms. There are multiple refrigerators and upright freezers and thermometers were present. The dishes are put through an industrial dishwasher. There are three industrial sinks available to hand wash dishes using the three-step method if necessary. I observed the pantry. Food is kept off the floor. Food items were stored according to the NHSPS guidelines.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize food tables and Purell Professional Surface Disinfectant to disinfect the changing tables.

I observed diaper changing procedures in several rooms and procedures are followed.

Cribs are used to nap for infants and then children transition to cots.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The playground is divided into three fenced in areas. There is an area for children aged two and under that is located directly outside the Duckling and Chipmunk rooms. There is small climbing equipment with a slide. Rubber tiles are used as the surface cushioning. There is also a grassy area to play on and teachers take out more items outside to play with when it is warmer. A tree is available to provide shade.

There is a large fenced in area for children two through preschool. Rubber tiles are used for surface cushioning. There is climbing equipment with slides and a climbing wall. There is a riding path that was made using tires. Riding toys are available. There is a sandbox. There is also a large grassy area for the children and trees are available for shade.

The third section is for school-aged children. Poured rubber is used for surface cushioning. There is a piece of climbing equipment with slides and other activities. There is a separate area with a climbing wall and pea gravel is used in this area for fall surfacing. There is also a cemented basketball area for the children. A tree provides shade. There is a large grassy area.

Staff and children files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed twenty children files. Files must contain emergency contact information for the doctor and dentist of each child. The doctor and dentist's name, phone number and complete street address must be provided. Six files did not have dental emergency contact information and one file did not have doctor emergency contact information. There were two outdated physicals and one missing physical. There were two

invalid immunization certificates because they were not signed or dated by medical personnel.

I reviewed six staff files. They were in good condition.

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

Staff members were observed to have great interaction with the children. Staff members sat on the floor with the children. They had children on their laps and were observed to be nurturing. They maintained positive conversation with the children. They were reading books to the children and sat with them to assist with crafts. They encouraged children to use their imaginations. They provided the children with praise and were flexible with their schedule to meet the needs of the children. They planned fun activities with the children and took pictures of the children to send to their parents on Brightwheel. Staff members were encouraging and offered the children choices. Child friendly music was playing in several rooms. The children seemed to enjoy and feel comfortable in the program.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The program has an IQ4K level of 1 that expires on 10/31/24.

The center has started construction on a new childcare center. The groundbreaking was on 10/18/22. They received federal rejuvenation grant through the Department of Health and Human Services to help with the funding. They continue to fundraise for the project. The fundraising for the new facility has reached 8.2 million. They retained Larson Construction as the contractor for the new facility and have worked long, hard hours on reducing the costs of the center.

The program has an amazing Farm to Early Care and Education (F2ECE) program that they provide to all their students. They have a great curriculum and a staff member dedicated to the program.

The center added professional development days for staff members has been added to the parent contract twice a year allowing them to accomplish more requirements within the workday timeframe.

The program works with Keystone AEA to address concerns for children with identified needs and to get resources.

The Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) continues to foster collaboration with all Decorah preschool partners. The preschool has parent/teacher conferences twice each year. Richelle Souza is the new lead teacher. She has been hired as a full-time staff member for the center and will work year-around. This provides consistency in the classroom and has provided a much more cohesive teaching team. The children's assessments in the classroom have improved drastically.

The center has a security system at the entrance to secure the building and have they cameras in every classroom.

The center has a collaborative partnership established with both Luther College for the early childhood endorsement and early elementary program. They have Luther students with music majors visit the program to enhance the center's music program.

The program uses the Brightwheel App to enhance the family/teacher communication. The Brightwheel app is used to sign children in and parents complete a health assessment.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

109.9(2)b: All files contain sufficient information and authorization to allow the center to secure emergency medical and dental services at any time child is in center's care.
Number not in compliance for medical: 1
Number not in compliance for dental: 6

109.9(3): Signed and dated Iowa immunization certificates are on file for each child enrolled.
Number invalid: 2

109.10(1)a: Preschool (for children five years and younger not enrolled in school): Physical exam report submitted within 30 days of admission, was obtained no more than 12 months prior to admission, is signed by a licensed MD, DO, PA, Chiropractor or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic

conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary.
Number not in compliance: 3

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

An administrative change is being made to name Daiton Johnson as the interim director.

In May 2023 an administrative change is being made to name Holly Benda as the new director. She started at Sunflower in June 2021 and recently completed NAC training. Her email address is holly.benda@sunflowerchildcare.org.

In July 2023 I made an administrative change to name Amy Winter as a co-director. Ms. Winter has a BA in elementary education with an early childhood endorsement, along with several other endorsements. She worked for 20 years in the school system.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.